

alliance Quebec NOTES

WEEKLY COMMENT & ANALYSIS ON THE COMING QUEBEC ELECTION

Published by the Communications Work Group at Alliance Quebec
Thursday, July 14, 1994 - ISSUE #4

The Process of Separation Starts Sept. 13 . . .

...According to the Parti Québécois policy which very carefully sets out an agenda for their "hockey game" in which the September 12th election is the "second period". Under their plan (as presented in all their major policy documents) the Parti Québécois, once in power would immediately pass a "solemn declaration", on our behalf, of Quebec's intention to become a separate state.

The new government would immediately follow that up by setting up a committee to write the new Quebec constitution (more on that below) and a committee to begin the process of negotiating "sovereignty" with the "Canada".

Furthermore, government officials would be mandated to

begin investigating the treaties and agreements under which Quebec would maintain (the PQ boldly asserts) the preferential trading relationships that we now enjoy through our participation in Canada.

All of this work would be completed prior to a referendum to be held in the spring of 1995 which would simply be a rubber stamp on the successful work already undertaken. (The months in between, one might assume, would also provide the new Quebec Parizeau government ample opportunity to demonstrate the "inefficient, costly and paralyzing" nature of Canada. Paralysis might not be hard to generate.)

Media Days

JULY 8, 1994 - The Advisory Council on English Education filed its report on schools under linguistic boards.

● - Lise Bissonnette in **Le Devoir** accused pollsters of offering false security to federalists.

● - Daniel Johnson's announcement of four by-elections in Marguette, Charlesbourg, Rivière-du-Loup, and Chomedey for August 29 is barely covered by the newspapers.

● - In **Le Devoir**, Josée Legault & Julius Grey say business leader pressures have no place in a Quebec election.

● - The Reform Party begins a newspaper advertising campaign to get Quebec voters to reject both Chretien and Bourchard and back Reform's "new" Canada.

● - Claude Castonguay, a former Tory Senator and one-time Quebec Liberal Cabinet minister, is quoted from an article he has written expressing his disillusionment with the federal system. Johnson says it's sad but understandable. Many feel Castonguay was over-hyped as a federalist in the first place.

JULY 9 - **Le Devoir** reports that Quebec has sent Louise Beaudoin to Mexico to prepare them for Quebec separation.

JULY 12 - A letter to the editor in the **Journal de Montreal** blasts the Société

(Over)

Or Does It, Really ?

In the summer election campaign, clear ideas and an understanding of the future plans should be put on the table. But there is no indication that they will be. Polls show most electors feel this election is simply about changing governments. The PQ's latest door-to-door documentation fails to mention separation plans at all and focuses on the economic future. The referendum, they say, is something different. Is it?

Certainly, their policy suggests otherwise. And that has not changed. What impact might these plans have?

Those are some of the questions we Quebecers ought to be asking.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

Number 1 - According to the "sovereignist" plans, the new Quebec constitution would have three component parts: The Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, a new Environmental Charter, and the Charter of the French Language (or Bill 101) restored to "its original integrity".

Bill 101 (before it was amended) was found to contravene Quebec Charter by Quebec's top courts (Superior & Appeal). How do you start building a constitution with documents that contradict each other?

Number 2 - Writing in The Globe Toronto trade lawyer Lawrence Herman pointed out "Nothing in international trade law would guarantee to Quebec all that it now has as a part of Canada."

In the knowledge that "re-negotiating" assures a position of lesser strength, what are Quebec's expectations for NAFTA, FTA, GATT, the Auto-pact, Dairy farmers, etc.?

ELECTIONSEMINARS

Starting this past Wednesday, Alliance Quebec has begun weekly evening seminars on the coming election. People are invited to come and hear an outline of what is at stake, how the process will take place, and how we might bring the separation question to a conclusion. And to ask questions and hear discussion.

Wednesdays, 6:30PM at AQ. Call ahead to say you're coming. 875-2771.

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Media Days

St-Jean Baptiste for promising the parade would not be political and then hijacking it again, including the national anthem business. "It is not surprising to me that many francophones in this province prefer participating the Saint-Patrick festivities to the Saint-Jean Baptiste."

- - Both the PLQ and the PQ are reported to be busy focusing their research and materials on their past economic performance since 1976 for the coming campaign.

- - Tony Kondaks' re-named "Canada!" party has its 1-900 phone number disconnected by order of the Director of Quebec Elections.

- - Daniel Johnson says electing the PQ will bring about permanent damage, & gets on the front of the French papers.

JULY 13 - Mr. Chagnon's office leaks a copy of the Kenniff Report on linguistic school boards to **The Gazette**.

- - Three more, largely unknown, Liberal cabinet ministers announce they will not be candidates.

- - UofM law prof., and an original PQ MNA, Jacques-Yves Morin responds to Gordon Robertson's article on separation & the law in **Le Devoir**.

- - The Reform Party announces its intention to get involved in the Quebec election campaign. (Carried in French.)

- - Johnson announces a French-language CEGEP for the West Island.

- - Jacques Parizeau makes a mysterious, low-key, visit to Paris to meet with junior officials. It is seen as an embarrassment in the French press.

JULY 14 - Daniel Johnson says Preston Manning's desire to make a contribution to the Quebec campaign is not welcome.

- - Johnson indicates a willingness to sign an inter-provincial free trade deal ASAP.

- - Johnson & Parizeau say they will meet in a televised debate.

- - The plight of the French school in Kingston, set back again, is meticulously reported in the French papers.

Questions & Answers

One of the things we are trying to do is study questions about Quebec's future and our role in it. Here we repeat some common ones.

Q - How about pensions and passports? What would Quebec keep?

A - According to the "sovereignist" policy, Quebecers would keep both. While this does cause some skepticism, the PQ maintain that it would simply change the source of pensions to a single location (Quebec City) and that many countries in the world (including Canada) allow dual citizenship. However, no countries allow their citizenship to be controlled by other states. And many people argue, with some success, that pensions currently paid in Quebec are partially funded from taxes raised elsewhere in Canada.

Q - What currency would we use?

A - The Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois insist that Quebec would be allowed to continue to use Canadian dollars. And that Canada would allow for a joint Canada-Quebec management of both monetary and trade policy. While that has proved impossible in other similar situations and polls have suggested other Canadians might not see that as a possible solution. The PQ has already said that, in that case, they could use US dollars. Sort of like Puerto Rico? One wonders.

Q - What about jobs and the job market?

A - One prominent Quebec business economist suggests that the process the PQ plans to launch could cause 10 to 20 years of economic upheaval. Whether or not this is a fair assessment, there is one thing on which all economists and job market analysts agree: Uncertainty does not breed jobs. The separatists plans will make life uncertain. With an estimated 14% unemployment in Montreal, how does this help?

"A LOSE - LOSE PROPOSITION"

Putting this province on course to face a referendum on "sovereignty" is a lose-lose scenario for Quebecers, many people say.

Few doubt the lead up to a referendum would be divisive and cost investment and jobs in Canada. Some say referendum discussions would also impact on our lives through higher mortgage rates, a lower dollar, fear for the future and the resulting strain on our social fabric.

A referendum win would signal economic turmoil that even the separatists acknowledge. **A referendum loss** would leave Quebec with a government that has no plan and, by their own declaration, no interest in other issues.

A lose-lose proposition. And with the only solid promise made.

Results of Riding - by - Riding Analysis

There are 125 ridings in Quebec. Looking at voting tendency they have gone the following way in the past three elections: 51 have always elected the party that takes power (these may be seen as "swing" ridings); 40 have elected only federalist parties (Liberals and Equality); 24 have elected separatists (Parti Québécois); seven have swung back and forth.

The PQ's strongest support is in eastern central Montreal, in suburbs like Longueuil and Repentigny, rural areas like the Eastern Townships above Hwy. 10 and mainland Quebec above the St. Lawrence. Quebec City, the South Shore, the Beauce, parts of the Laurentians and Chateauguay Valley are "swing". The Gaspé, Laval, suburbs of Montreal to the south and south-east are swing areas, and many of the industrial areas in the east of the island of Montreal (including M. Parizeau's L'Assomption riding).

The federalists are very strong on the Island of Montreal west of St. Lawrence Blvd., in the Outaouais, the Townships and along the Ottawa river.